

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE COUNSELOR
WASHINGTON

June 20, 1962

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Dear John:

After discussion with various interested agencies, I am establishing a panel of individuals from several departments and agencies to consider the likely strategic balance that may emerge, or that can be brought about, in the period 1970-75. I attach a copy of a letter which I have sent to Paul Nitze further explaining the questions in this area which I have in mind for examination at this time.

I anticipate that the study will be of special interest to CIA. I should, therefore, like to extend through you, an invitation for Mr. Ray Cline to be a member of the panel. I understand that Professor Schelling has discussed scope and timing of the study with Mr. Cline and that Mr. Cline is willing to participate.

Sincerely,

Walt

J. W. Foster

Attachment

As stated above

Mr. John McCone,
Director,
Central Intelligence Agency,
Washington, D. C.

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State Dept. review completed

June 20, 1962

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Dear Paul:

Many important areas of foreign-policy planning require a better appreciation than we presently have of the likely strategic nuclear balance that may emerge, or that can be brought about, in the period 1970-75. Policy towards NATO and other alliances, towards arms control, foreign assistance, and toward particular countries and sensitive areas, needs to be planned against a background of strategic deterrence and of prospects relating to general war. These areas are in addition, of course, to military research and development, civil defense, weapon-system evaluation, and strategic military planning, that evidently need to be based on long-range assumptions. The urgency of current programs and policies tends to keep our attention focussed on the next several years; the lead-time in our policies, however, is often so great that we should look well beyond the period through which our programs are usually projected.

Further, our analysis and anticipation of Soviet policy also require a better appreciation of what the Soviets may anticipate as the strategic-force situation of a decade or more from now. The Soviets will undoubtedly face some critical choices in their arms policies and foreign policies, choices that they will have to make in the context of some expectation about their future strategic-force relation to the Western Alliance and, particularly, to the United States. Much of our own planning hinges on anticipated Soviet capabilities, and undoubtedly much of their planning depends on the future capabilities they attribute to the Western Alliance; a study of likely strategic nuclear developments should for that reason address itself simultaneously to Soviet uncertainties and decisions.

I am

The Honorable

Paul H. Nitze,

Assistant Secretary of Defense,

International Security Affairs,

The Pentagon.

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I am convinced that no straightforward projection of present trends into the 1970's will serve the purpose. The uncertainties--in budget, technology, alliances, and Soviet decisions--accumulate too rapidly. Furthermore, it is precisely these uncertainties--including the uncertainties that beset Soviet planning--to which we need to be alert. A main purpose of a study looking into the 1970-75 period should be to identify the events and emergent situations we should be sensitive to in the coming years and the lead-time on the decisions they would entail.

I have in mind examination of questions like those raised in T (G) of the "National Security Policy Planning Tasks":

What are the significant kinds and degrees of "superiority" and "parity" at the strategic level that may emerge, and how do they depend on (1) Soviet Bloc doctrine and program choices, (2) U. S. and Allied program choices, (3) technological developments, (4) other-country developments?

What would be the political significance of the different kinds of strategic balance that may emerge and what changes in U. S. and Allied strategic doctrine would be entailed by alternative strategic-force developments?

What are the major uncertainties as to Sino-Soviet Bloc intent and doctrine with respect to strategic forces, and how should these uncertainties affect our force programs, alliance policies, and attitude toward arms control. To what extent, for example, will the Sino-Soviet Bloc--particularly the USSR--seek impressive purely deterrent forces, effective first-strike forces, political-demonstration forces, etc., and how will they divide emphasis between "defensive" and "offensive" forces, how much will they rely on secrecy for bluff, security, etc., as of 1970? How reliably will the Soviets anticipate U. S. intentions or programs with respect to strategic military forces?

What are the economic implications of these projections for the United States, the rest of the Free World, and the Communist Bloc?

What role is played by other countries in these projections; for example, by India, France, Communist China?

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If you agree, I am prepared to set up a panel of individuals from the several interested departments and agencies to consider the main alternative strategic-force relationships that may emerge by the early 1970's, their policy implications, and the likely timing of developments we need to be most alert to and decisions we need to be most prepared for.

As a basis for the panel's work, there needs to be a study drawing together as much as can presently be said about relevant developments into the early 1970's. Such a study cuts across all the interested departments and agencies, but should be located in your office. I understand that you are prepared to see that such a study is undertaken and that Mr. Thomas C. Schelling has agreed to undertake it together with a small group of highly qualified individuals.

The product of that study will be taken up by the panel. I would emphasize that, while definite results will, of course, be welcome, the purpose is not to settle on an agreed projection or to choose a "most likely" course of events or a single preferred U. S. policy, but to examine the alternative possibilities to which we need to be alert. We should particularly be concerned with how to recognize early the changes that occur and any new decisions or program changes that may be needed. We should be concerned with how to maintain necessary flexibility for adapting to a changing environment. And we should especially examine the way that our own strategic posture and alliance policy can influence Soviet programs, expectations, and decisions. Over a period as long as the study will cover, a major influence on the strategic-force programs of both the United States and the USSR will undoubtedly be what each estimates the other's current and future programs will be.

I am addressing separate invitations to panel members in departments and agencies other than the Department of Defense. I assume that you will arrange for appropriate Defense participation along the lines which have been discussed with you.

Sincerely,

W. W. Rostow

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